

Another Specimen of the Crested Penguin in Western Australia

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In *The Emu*, vol. XXXVII, 1938, p. 197, Dr. R. A. Falla has given his findings on the young Crested Penguin which came ashore at Bunbury, Western Australia, on July 14, 1935, and which was the subject of previous notes by Mr. F. Lawson Whitlock and Major H. M. Whittell. Dr. Falla identified it as *Eudyptes crestatus*, the only species of the genus so far known to occur in Western Australia, and said that it appeared to be referable to the race *moseleyi*, originating, in all likelihood, from the islands of St. Paul or Amsterdam.

Whilst Major Whittell and I were in correspondence over the specimen early in 1936, I received a message from him acquainting me with an extraordinary meeting with another bird of the species in his home town, Bridgetown. Whilst he was passing a garage his son drew his attention to a Crested Penguin walking about while a car bound for Perth was being refuelled. The owner of the bird was Mr. J. A. B. Phillp, of Applecross, who had obtained it from a resident at Wilson's Inlet. As Mr. Phillp was travelling back to Perth, there was time only for a hasty examination of the bird but arrangements were made for me to inspect it as early as possible.

I saw the bird at Mr. Phillp's home on February 14, when it had been about 3½ months in captivity. It had been found on the coast at Wilson's Inlet, near Denmark, by the person from whom Mr. Phillp had acquired it.

The bird was the central figure at an afternoon tea party on the occasion of my visit. It was walking about on the verandah when I arrived and behaved with impeccable manners as it gravely received the admiring attentions of its human visitors. It was docile to a degree and friendly with everybody. It had never been vicious, apparently, and only once had Mr. Phillp known it to attack any person with its beak. The bird presented a trim, neat figure, in excellent plumage, with a fully-developed crest of yellow and black feathers intermingled. Only a few of the yellow plumes were black-tipped. It was very similar to the Albany (Middleton Beach) example in the Western Australian Museum (A. 1509), the only fully-adult local specimen hitherto preserved in collections. The iris was reddish-chestnut; beak, nut-brown, darker at the base; feet, flesh-pink upper surface, black underneath and at the back; claws and edge of the webbing black. The weight was 4 lb. 12½ oz.

Later the bird was disposed of to the Zoological Gardens at South Perth, but it did not survive long, falling a victim to the same malady which kills off all penguins kept at that zoo—a fungal infection of the respiratory passages. The body was sent to the Western Australian Museum, and

prepared as a study skin on April 3 (no. M2057). It was found to be a male. The iris at the time was noted by the taxidermist as being bright red.

THE FEEDING OF PENGUINS AND OTHER AQUATIC BIRDS

Whilst in the possession of Mr. Phillp this Crested Penguin gave striking evidence of non-adaptability in its failure to adjust its feeding habits to a new environment. Mr. Phillp was unable to keep the bird in a pond or to allow it access to any considerable body of water and it was usually kept in a shade house in the garden. Throughout its rather lengthy period of captivity it had never been able to acquire the faculty of feeding itself on dry land. Mr. Phillp had to force-feed it at each meal. The daily allowance of about half-a-pound of chopped mullet had to be pushed into its mouth in small pieces, with the beak forcibly held open.

The late Tom Carter recorded a precisely-similar feeding difficulty with the Little Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*) which he endeavoured to keep in captivity. He wrote (*The Emu*, vol. x, 1910, p. 137): "Although adult birds they (there were two of them) resolutely refused to eat, refusing pieces of meat and live frogs regularly offered to them. I was obliged to feed them by force as long as I had them, usually getting well bitten while doing so." In that case also the birds had dry quarters, without access to water.

It may be that such rigid feeding habits may be more general with specialized aquatic birds than is generally supposed. Recently, Mr. J. A. Tubb has had somewhat similar experience with a pair of Little Grebes (*Podiceps ruficollis*) which he tried to keep alive after rescuing them from a fishing net at the Young River, near Esperance, Western Australia. He gave me the following note: "The birds were kept in captivity for over two weeks, during which time they lost almost all fear of humans and showed active resentment when a hand was ventured into their cage. For the first three days the birds had to be force-fed as they would not pick up food from the floor of the cage. On the fourth day the hen was noticed to pick up and swallow a morsel of fish which had fallen into the water vessel. Several more pieces were dropped in and the male soon followed the example of his mate. For the next several days the feeding was carried on in this manner and the birds would approach the water vessel in anticipation as soon as the door of the cage was opened. On the eighth day the male selected a large piece of fish and in shaking the morsel broke off several flakes which fell on to the floor of the cage. Having swallowed the main piece he then picked up and swallowed the smaller flakes. On his example the hen soon learnt to pick up food off the floor. Thereafter, until the termination of their confinement, 16 days after capture, the birds fed readily whenever food was offered, but obviously preferred food which was placed in the water vessel to that placed on the floor."